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Dear Friends,

A Free "Do Over"

Over the last four weeks I have heard four sermons while traveling with the Global Theological Education group in Thailand and Korea. Each sermon was an invitation to renewal on the occasion of the New Year, ranging through levels of inspiration. My father used to say that there was no sermons from which you couldn't take something, and I took something from this theme preach in variety of ways, and in a variety of languages.

I am grateful to have this new beginning each year. Grateful that I, and for that matter many of us, can pause and say "let's try this a new way, let's try this over". I think of the New Year as a free "do over". For us as Christians, it is by grace that we are renewed, that we are invited "not to be conformed, but transformed". In Asia, the New Year is a time not only to look forward but to look back as well. We were invited to look back at those who have loved us, and made all we have possible, our forebears and ancestors. We are invited to look forward, moving past those things that have hurt, or constrained us. I wish for you, and for us as a conference a season of new beginnings built on the richness of all we have inherited.

Peace,

Tim Downs

Timothy C. Downs
Conference Minister

**UCC News****UCC Newsroom**

Headlines from the United Church of Christ

Driskell uses broad brush to inspire Black History Month worship gathering

The "good news" can be delivered via myriad methods, and if you ask David C. Driskell, it may well involve a paintbrush, a keyboard or a strong set of pipes. Appearing on the eve of the Lenten season as part of the UCC's celebration of Black History Month, the 80-year-old Driskell is one of the world's leading authorities on African-American art.



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